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**Every effort was made during the
speech to accurately capture any of
the Mayor 's unwritten comments.**

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS 2004

THANK YOU STEVE, AND THANK YOU TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND YOUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS DAY POSSIBLE. LET ME ALSO THANK MY FAMILY AND STAFF.

Before we get started, let me clear the air on a few things. First of all, I am honored and humbled to have been elected your Mayor for a second term. There was some talk about my heart not being in this job. I can assure that this is not the case. In fact, there is more of my heart in this job than any other body part with the exception of my belly which, unfortunately, enters the second term significantly larger than the first.

Thanks for those who voted for me. Those who didn't, there are no hard feelings.

I stated in last year's address that it is impossible to determine the state of our city without first addressing the state of our state and the state of our country. The three are inextricably connected. This year, as in any year past or any to come, will be no different.

I also spoke of the times in which we live – one of the most challenging eras in our history. Unfortunately, today that too is no different.

Just as World War II significantly defined the greatest generation, the War on Terrorism will occupy a dominant space in the legacy of this generation and, yes, the legacy of this City. It may not be politically correct, but you need to know where your Mayor stands. I stand in full support of President Bush. This is a war we must win and I support our President in his steadfast commitment to do so.

Here in our state, severe budget problems, decades in the making, have finally come crashing down, adding additional challenges to Californians.

For California cities, the roll call is staggering – Long Beach, \$67 million deficit; L.A., \$300 million deficit, San Diego, \$166 million deficit, San Francisco, \$352 million deficit. But yet in the midst of this storm, a city has emerged that has defied the pundits, confounded its critics by meeting these challenges head-on and, in the process, earned its way to unprecedented levels of state and national prominence. I'm proud to tell you today that city is the place we call home – Fresno, CA.

Over the last several years, as the success of our City became known throughout the country, I have been asked three questions, over and over:

What are you doing?

How are you doing it?

Will you send me some information on that?

I'm always happy to share with them our story. Most recently, I was asked to be the Keynote Speaker to open the 4th annual City & County Innovations Summit in San Diego, a national organization.

I was honored to represent our community and once again tell our story to a national audience.

So how have we, as a city, managed to move farther and faster than anytime in our history, during one of the most difficult times in our history?

Very simple, by rising up to meet our challenges, not shrinking from them, and by understanding that the true success of our city, or for that matter, the state of our city, cannot be accurately measured solely by politics, policies and programs. The true indicator of present and future success lies in three factors that are much more telling and much more powerful. They cannot be Fed Exed, faxed, or e-mailed because they reside in the heart and soul of our people. I am talking about values. In particular, three community values essential to the lasting health of any city.

It is the same three core values that have allowed our country to survive two world wars, the Great Depression and become the strongest superpower the world has ever seen.

The first core value is **UNITY**. We've have heard the sayings:

"There is strength in unity"

"All for one – one for all"

"United we stand – divided we fall"

"We either hang together or hang apart"

And we know that all of these sayings are true no matter how many times you utter them.

In 1999, I announced my decision to run for Mayor of Fresno. I ran on the premise that, although we had accomplished much in our city, over the course of two plus decades a condition had developed that, if continued to be left unaddressed, would preclude us from ever becoming the vibrant, globally competitive city we all wanted to be. An inequity of access to education, opportunity and quality of life had literally created a "Tale of Two Cities."

I took some heat, a lot of heat, from several corners of our community for describing our city in such a manner. Some said I was "running down our city and running our schools down." I suppose some could have taken my words as an attack upon them and their particular interest. But I think the vast majority saw it as it was truly meant to be: as a clarion call to action. To do what our parents and grandparents did when faced with problems that must be solved: to acknowledge the truth regardless of how painful a task that might be. Then come together, work together, stay together, stay focused, stay strong and stay the course until the mission of solving that problem is accomplished.

That call went out almost four years ago. The voice of the skeptics and critics were in full force. (*Fred at Gym-miracle*) But we did come together and the voices began to fade – we worked together and they faded even more. We have stayed together and now these voices are being drowned out on an almost daily basis by our community celebrating yet another victory.

You know, in the movie, “A Few Good Men,” Jack Nicholson uttered a memorable line: “You can’t handle the truth.” Well, the City of Fresno has not only handled the truth, we have dedicated ourselves, like the generation before us, to facing that truth head-on as a united community committed to ensuring equal access to opportunity, education, and quality of life for every Fresnan in every neighborhood.

Back in 1999 we also identified some critical issues in our city that we vowed to bring the full force of this newly united Fresno upon. Four years later, although there is much left to be done in each of those areas, the results are something every hardworking Fresnan can feel proud of. Let’s take a quick look at some of these key issues.

In the area of **GROWTH**, we literally had no plan four years ago. For nearly thirty years we had succumbed to unbridled growth to the North accompanied by an abandonment of the South, no General Plan update since 1984 and a relationship with Clovis and the County that wouldn’t even let us get together, much less plan together.

Today, we have made significant gains. Through newfound cooperation between the City, County and Clovis, we have a general plan that is not only working, but is a model for the rest of the Nation. When we unveiled it in 2002, we were told that the plan would not work. “People just don’t want to live in the southern section of the City,” we were told by some. In reality, what we have seen is a 25% increase in building permit activity since 2001. We have seen market rate housing projects proposed for southeast and southwest Fresno. The vast majority of growth is in southwest and southeast Fresno. They said it couldn’t be done. Well I’m here today to tell you that it has been done and it is working! In addition to new market rate housing projects, the City’s Housing Division has assisted over 1000 families with affordable housing opportunities through our first time home buyer assistance program. It is my commitment that this Administration will do everything it can to keep the American Dream of home ownership alive for every Fresnan, regardless of social condition or position.

Thanks to collaboration between the City and Redevelopment Agency, we now have a downtown that has been re-born, not revitalized. The downtown skyline has changed dramatically and there are over 2,000 new employees in downtown Fresno and enough parking for all of them. We are going to see our first downtown housing proposal – a joint venture called Vagabond Lofts between the City, RDA, Granville Homes and Pyramid Homes. A special thank you to the Assemi family for accepting the challenge to build housing in downtown Fresno. I can’t tell you how much I look forward to the groundbreaking ceremony for this historic project.

In addition, much progress has been made on Vision 2010. The land has been cleared for the new 5th District Court of Appeals; the two IRS Buildings have made it through the pipeline and are now completed. The Federal Courthouse and Regional Medical Center expansion are nearing completion; and we are in negotiations with Forrest City, a national developer, to develop 85 acres south of the stadium into a master-planned mixed-use project. At this rate, Vision 2010 may very well be renamed Vision 2009! A very special thank you to Dan Fitzpatrick and Jerry Duncan for their hard work.

As our City continues to expand, it is vital that we address the infrastructure requirements. My recently released budget takes the single largest step towards ending the "Tale of Two Cities" by implementing the largest investment in City history, the "No Neighborhood Left Behind" initiative.

The plan focuses on constructing and repairing critical infrastructure in 71 neighborhoods where little or no infrastructure currently exists, and in some places has never existed. The project's total cost is budgeted at \$45 million over a six-year period starting with \$10 million in '05. One of the wisest and most prudent investments our City has ever made. In addition to the "No Neighborhood Left Behind" initiative, the citywide investment in neighborhoods will continue with over \$16 million in funding. We have set records every budget year on infrastructure spending. This funding will allow our Public Works department to continue with their work program that last year allowed them to overlay 40 miles of City streets, install 200 ADA ramps, remove and replace over 10,000 cubic yards of damaged sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

But infrastructure is not just about concrete and blacktop, but also about crime reduction and quality of life as well. A neighborhood that has good sidewalks, curbs and gutters will in turn give its residents a sense of pride. In many instances, after infrastructure was replaced or repaired, we have seen homeowners turn around and invest in their homes...a new roof, new landscaping, new windows. The fact is, a proud neighborhood is a safer neighborhood. A neighborhood whose residents are involved and care about each other will see reductions in crime. See Council, I'm learning! Thank you for the message that has been hammered at me – you were right.

In 2003, the City of Fresno experienced its lowest crime rate in 32 years. Through prudent management and hard work, the Fresno Police Department has become a model for public safety agencies throughout the country. The department was recently awarded first place in the 1st annual California Law Enforcement Challenge.

We know there is a rising gang problem – we are ready to meet it and defeat it. The Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium (M.A.G.E.C.) consists of thirty-five full-time officers from participating agencies. The goal of M.A.G.E.C. is to eradicate criminal street gangs. In June and again in August of 2003, M.A.G.E.C. joined with other Department units and local agencies including the Fresno County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, California Youth Authority, State Parole and U.S. Marshals to conduct two large scale, pro-active gang suppression operations. For six weeks, more

than 200 officers set out to locate and arrest violent parolees and those involved in gang violence.

The truth is, as I've stated before and I'm not going to sugarcoat it, we have seen an increase in gang activity in Fresno, as has every other city in California. And the truth is, we will not tolerate it. But in order to have a truly effective Public Safety policy, this zero tolerance policy regarding street violence must also be accompanied by early intervention with our at-risk youth. We all know that a criminal is usually created long before his or her first crime. That's just a fact.

The "Buddies" program was created to provide positive adult role models for at-risk children. It started with volunteers from the Fresno Police Department that agreed to make a one-year commitment to spend a minimum of four hours per month mentoring their "buddy." It's not like they don't have anything else to do in the police department - that's how much they love this program. It quickly expanded to local churches and service organizations as a way of increasing community involvement. Because of its proven effectiveness, the Buddies program will be expanded in 2004.

The "Life Skills" program, where students are taught personal self-management, general social skills, goal setting, problem solving, communication, and the consequences of choices, was taught to over 1,200 students in 5 middle schools last year. The objective this year is to expand the program to every middle school in Fresno and this is reflected in our new budget with an appropriation of \$260,000. In addition, the Enrichment After School Program is reflected in this year's budget. I urge the Council to please keep this funding intact. This is the wisest, most important funding request in the budget. Furthermore, after the second full year of the enactment of our Juvenile Accountability Ordinance (a fancy name for curfew, which you're not supposed to say any more), there has been an overall decrease of 13% in selected crimes reported during school hours when compared to the baseline year of 2001. Thank you, Council, for enacting this program – it saves lives. There are more kids in school now than ever before.

Sadly, 70% of all violence occurs within the sight of a child. Breaking the cycle of domestic violence is key to the prevention of child abuse, spousal abuse and elder abuse – three areas very close to my & Chief Dyer's hearts. The Fresno Police Department has partnered with numerous County, State and Federal agencies to form the Family Justice Bureau. The Family Justice Bureau provides housing, counseling and other critical needs to victims of these terrible crimes. We have applied for a \$1 million federal grant that will enable all services to exist under one roof and we will be lobbying hard for that grant.

As "first responders", members of the Fresno Police Department who are assigned to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force continue work to safeguard the Fresno area from acts of terrorism. Everyone is a target. We have to acknowledge that every city is a target. Additionally, of the 1,143 Citizen Corps Councils in the U.S., we are one of 10 in

the national "Best Practices" group. I am committed to being the most prepared city for terrorism in California.

To fulfill my commitment to the community and validate that our Police Department will remain the best in the nation, an independent police auditor known as the Sacramento model is included in my budget. I want to clear up something right now. This is not an indictment of the Police Department. This is facing the realities of life. No city our size is without some kind of civilian oversight. It is intended to ensure the trust of our community, a trust that the police department has worked so hard to build up and we can't let perception tear it down as we prepare to make our way through a more violent community. Very soon, 3-4,000 mid-level criminals will be descending on cities in California. We have nothing to fear or to hide.

Our Fire Department has made significant progress toward its goal of establishing itself as "Best in Class." Our pledge to improve station facilities is on track and pending implementation. Included in the coming year's budget is \$4.7 million for renovations, \$5.8 million for the construction of two new fire stations and over \$2.5 million for new apparatus and equipment. Also, in addition to the twelve firefighting positions that were added last year, resources for another twelve have been recommended in this year's budget appropriations. There is still much to be done, we dug a big hole here, unfortunately, but we must face the truth. Under the leadership of Chief Randy Bruegman, this administration is determined to provide the best fire service in the nation to the people of Fresno.

There is no better example of unity and teamwork than the Fresno Regional **JOBS** Initiative (RJI). Over 200 people from the public and private sector have spent literally thousands of hours on a strategy to create 30,000 new jobs in 5 years. I don't think anything that contributes more to a person's health and well being more than having a job. The RJI has gained significant momentum and is well on its way to instituting the structure needed to accomplish its mission.

To assist the RJI in its job creation efforts, this year's budget includes funding for a Downtown Vocational School. This will provide a much-needed resource for our young adults and provide the basis for the "Bridge Academies" recommended by the Regional Jobs Initiative. Over the coming months, I will be working with State Center Chancellor Tom Crow and Dr. Pete Mehas to make this school the best it can be.

The City's Economic Development Department and EDC have also formed a strong partnership that has contributed greatly to some significant recognition of our job creation efforts. Most notably, Inc. Magazine recognized Fresno as #1 in California and #4 in the Nation among medium size cities in economic vitality for entrepreneurs. Also, Fresno was ranked 8th out of the 200 largest cities in the Nation in short-term job growth and 2nd in the State for Metro Area Employment Growth. Those are the facts – we are winning. We've got to learn to accept winners. In addition, through outreach efforts, Fresno businesses are benefiting from over \$30 Million in tax incentives as a result of our Empowerment and Enterprise Zone designations.

Unity has taken on a whole new meaning at City Hall with the adoption of the Pacific Institute training. I want to thank the employees, the greatest employees in the world, for embracing this outcome-based, performance-driven culture. You have ushered in a new era and are the most important component of this revolutionary initiative in the City of Fresno. I want to thank Deputy Mayor Roger Montero for bringing the Pacific institute to Fresno.

In order for our city to succeed, we must realize that unity cannot be confined to a city, neighborhood, or county. Critical areas such as Air Quality, Transportation, and Economic Development will all require a valleywide approach. That is why we are committed to the funding of Operation Clean Air and the Central California Mayors Conference. I want to thank the City Council for their continued support of these important regional organizations.

I think we can all agree that unity in our city is a critical and essential component in terms of smart growth, public safety and job creation. But nowhere is its presence more needed and its absence more catastrophic than in the **EDUCATION** of our children.

Our children are the future. Let me say this again: Our children are the future. I know it's been said so many times from so many sources in our society that, unfortunately, in the minds of some, it has become a cliché. We cannot let the frequency of this statement diminish the truth of its content. To fail in the education of our children is to forfeit our future as a city. That's the truth.

Some of you have suggested that I should "tend to my knitting", that I should focus on graffiti, crime and neighborhood health. Well, by never retreating from my commitment to a quality education for every child, I am doing just that. Statistical analysis shows that violent crime in our city would be reduced by thirty to forty percent if our unemployment levels were at the median of other California cities. Imagine that. Reducing our unemployment requires that we address its root causes. A review of unemployment claims for a recent twelve-month period in Fresno County shows that almost 60% of those claims were from people without a high school degree or GED. The dropout rate at Fresno Unified is almost twice the State average. Our businesses complain that two out of three employment candidates with high school degrees from Fresno Unified fail to pass a test of 8th grade reading, writing and math skills.

Now, my administration has launched a frontal assault on crime, where Chief Dyer and his organization have made great gains; and on creating jobs, where the Regional Jobs Initiative is giving us the best chance in decades to finally break the back of our 25-year history of chronic unemployment, but progress on education reform must proceed in parallel if we are to be successful.

I have to tell you that I've thought a lot about why we haven't yet found effective ways to collaborate on education reform. Why is it that we have extraordinary collaborative efforts under way on air quality (Operation Clean Air), on job creation (RJI), on public

safety (Public Safety Commission), but haven't been able to find a formula for collaboration on education? Why is that? Since I have the microphone here today, I guess I get to tell my thoughts. My answer is that I think we have had a fundamental disagreement on expectations. My expectation is not that we should make small incremental improvements that would take thirty years to reach average. We should set very bold objectives for change and go after them with the same aggressiveness and persistence with which we are pursuing job creation. My expectation is not that we should make excuses because our demographics are challenging, but that we are morally obligated to give every child a quality education regardless of the circumstances from which they come. I want to commend Larry Powell, Superintendent of Central Unified, which has some of the worst demographics in the State, and his willingness to face the problems head-on and take action on them with a sense of urgency. *(Recognize Terry Bradley of Clovis Unified – They are doing the right thing, saying the right things. They set a great example and are now perceived as a district on the move.)*

Look, if I have had my differences with the board of Fresno Unified it is because of differences of expectations, not because I don't respect them as individuals. In fact, let me pause right now to give tribute to a great American, Dick Johanson. Dick has announced that he will be retiring from the Fresno Unified Board at the end of June. There is no person in Fresno that has given more to our community. I know for a fact that his willingness to serve on the Fresno Unified Board was a personal sacrifice, a pure act of service to community. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for leading the way and setting an example.

Let me make one thing very clear. This gets lost every time I say it. If I have been critical of our education at Fresno Unified, it is certainly not because of our teachers and children. We have some of the best teachers in our State. It's because the Board has been part of allowing a politically poisoned, state run system that has stripped away the structure and resources that those teachers need to reach all our kids and have the positive influence on them that they most desperately need. It's a State-run fiasco. A vast majority of our teachers are doing extraordinary work despite the obstacles in their way. Can we sit here today and say in good conscience that there is equal access in this City to a quality education for all of our children?

I have an old saying: "The truth will set you free but first it will make you miserable." In 1896 the Supreme Court ruled in Plessy vs. Ferguson that forbidding a black human being to ride in the same train car as a white human being did not violate Constitutional Law. That decision ushered in the era of "separate but equal" – a decision this country is still paying dearly for today.

You know, as time went on after that decision, generation after generation, some tried to justify the decision with their sick racist doctrine that African Americans were inferior to white people. But I think most Americans knew the real truth – that Court had made a horrible, horrible mistake. I believe as time went on, there was an ever-present

gnawing in their gut that “separate but equal” was morally wrong and would haunt the conscience of this nation forever.

Yet “separate but equal” was the law of the land for 58 years. 58 years. For 58 years, we as society stood by while our segregated school system tore at the soul of this great nation while stealing away the dreams, the precious dreams, of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of our best and brightest children.

But in 1951 some folks in a city, Topeka, decided to face the miserable truth and do something about it. Their efforts culminated in 1954 with the landmark Supreme Court ruling called Brown vs. The Board of Education. The Court ruled “separate but equal” to be unconstitutional and ordered the desegregation of our Nation’s schools.

The vote was 9-0. Unanimous. I have a feeling that Chief Justice Earl Warren fought very hard for that unanimous vote. And I think I know why. Absolute unity was a must because he knew that this decision had to not only be a ruling, but also a strong, emphatic statement that segregation in our schools was over forever. The truth had been faced and our children had been set free...or so we thought.

May 17, 2004 marked the 50th anniversary of Brown vs. The Board of Education, yet half a century later, segregation still dominates our public school system. Except this time it is socioeconomic segregation fomented by social malaise and, here in California, by a no less than corrupt State Education Committee that is committed at all costs, to protect the status quo. A status quo that has killed every reform bill, every reform bill, that comes before them and every effort to provide school choice to parents and children. Under the present law, this system effectively shackles children to failing schools. Most of these children are poor and most of these children are minorities. We as a city need to ask this question: Is separate but equal really over?

Make no mistake, this socioeconomic segregation may be disguised a little better – it is, I guess, the new and socially acceptable version. But its results are just as devastating to the children and just as threatening to our future as Plessy vs. Ferguson was in 1896.

Do we have the courage to unify and face the truth? I believe we do.

Today I am announcing several actions and initiatives regarding education in the City of Fresno.

Number One: I want to reiterate my 100% support for the “No Child Left Behind Act.” It is the most significant piece of legislation to address socioeconomic segregation since Brown vs. The Board of Education. I commend President Bush and Secretary Paige for their leadership, courage and commitment to our children. Does it need to be tweaked? Yes. But to demand that every child to have a solid education is committed to by President Bush and Rod Paige, and I know that from talking to them face to face.

Number Two: And believe me, I take no delight in this. I have always opposed vouchers in the past. However, I stated in last year's address that, if significant reforms had not occurred in Fresno Unified within a year, I would be forced to reconsider that position. Those reforms have not occurred. Therefore, today I am announcing my support of School Choice vouchers. For those that will take, and many will, the political route and seek to characterize me as some "far-right Republican" for this decision, I would suggest you talk to Mayor Williams of Washington, DC and Senator Dianne Feinstein, two staunch Democrats and two of the most ardent supporters of public education who have recently made the same decision that I have just announced.

Number Three: I will immediately get to work to seek legislation at the state and federal level to fund scholarship vouchers for our most at-risk children.

Number Four: Drug abuse, along with terrorism are the two greatest threats to the future of this nation. Drug use is growing at an alarming rate in our schools. We have a responsibility as a united community to address this reality and not run from it. John Walters, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, chose Fresno as one of only four cities to host summits on student drug testing. At that summit, San Clemente High School gave an impressive presentation of their voluntary drug testing program. The results have been dramatic, extremely positive and irrefutable. This system involves parental consent and all privacy issues have been addressed. It is treated as a health issue, as it rightfully should.

Superintendent Larry Powell sent me a letter explaining to me the San Clemente Model. According to Superintendent Powell, many districts are very interested in pursuing this model. The program is not designed to "catch" kids but rather to provide them with the tools they need in a non-punitive way to make good decisions when pressured to use drugs. Study after study has shown the negative impact of drugs on our society, including broken marriages and families, increased juvenile crime, increased incarceration rates, and a severe reduction in the ability to secure and maintain employment. The personal and financial tragedies created in the drug culture have severely damaged families and neighborhoods. The San Clemente Model is a major step in the right direction to re-establish those positive values that have been undermined by the drug culture. I want to commend Larry Powell for his bold leadership.

Superintendents from Fresno County, led by one of the most courageous men that I know, County Superintendent Dr. Pete Mehas. Peter, I appreciate you so much. Pete has begun a positive discussion about Voluntary and Random Drug Testing as demonstrated by San Clemente High School. He has reported that the interest is high and the folks from San Clemente High School are being invited back to Fresno for an in-depth presentation to all of the Superintendents in Fresno County.

Superintendent Larry Powell has provided his Board of Trustees with preliminary information on the San Clemente model. Those discussions will be expanded in the next few months as families begin to hear more about how to equip students with the

refusal skills needed to resist drugs. One very positive aspect of the San Clemente model is that the control for participation remains with the parents.

Number Five: I am also pleased to announce a collaboration with Dr. Mehas in pursuing a “New Governance” model, which will effectively return much of the power that presently resides with the state back to the local level. This is a solid, common-sense reform and will create true accountability at the local level. We will be pursuing this as a pilot program for Fresno County and look forward to the support of Secretary Riordan, Governor Schwarzenegger and President Bush. And no, it is not Mayoral appointments process. I tried hard, but Pete wouldn’t let me do that.

Number Six: Recent studies have shown that startling percentages of children are entering kindergarten lacking the basic skills to learn. These children usually fall behind and many never catch up. Sadly for these kids, and sadly for our community, a great number of these children end up living a life of despair and many turn to a life of crime.

Today I am challenging our community to face that truth and make a collective commitment to take action – to set a goal of becoming the municipal leader in America in early childhood development and preschool education. I’m calling on all government agencies, educational institutions, churches, faith-based groups, non-profit organizations and businesses to partner together in this commitment to build a city that provides access to every child in our community - the most comprehensive, innovative and effective preschool opportunities in America.

I am setting a goal of January 1, 2007 to achieve this critically important goal. It is a high goal, but so are the stakes. It is a goal that I know we can attain. I know this because I know what love this community holds for our children.

As your Mayor, I have a solemn responsibility to do what I feel in my heart, is the right thing for you, the people of Fresno. In today’s world especially, the right thing is not going to be the easy or politically correct thing and it’s certainly not going to please everyone all the time. Now, I’m not going to stand up here and tell you that the decisions I have made, or every one that I am going to make, is correct. History will have it’s say in that. But I can stand here today and look each and every Fresnan square in the eye and say that I have always done, and will always do, my best to discern the right thing, and then do the right thing for the overall health of this community. I pledged an oath before you and God to do so, and I am determined and committed to upholding that oath.

If I retreated from my commitment to a quality education for every child in this city, that would be in violation of that oath and I should be removed from office. So that’s where your Mayor’s coming from.

We talked about community values. The second core value I want to talk about today is **LOVE OF COMMUNITY**. You may ask why this is important. Without a love of

community, we have no unity. Nowadays, some folks ridicule even the notion of loving your community. I suppose it is a sign of the times. But I don't believe that's the case in our City. In fact, our Unity we just talked so much about bears witness to the fact that love of our community is not passé, but is alive and well. It remains, as it always has, because Love of Community is the mother of Unity.

I want to recognize a few individuals who epitomize a love of community and have given so much of themselves, sometimes at great personal sacrifice:

Len Ross—Who has brought the sport of golf to our at-risk youth

Mac Foster – youth boxing

Larry Arce – Fresno Rescue Mission

Clayton Turner – a quadriplegic hero of mine who paints with his mouth and feet. He gave me a painting with an old broken down wagon called “Folks Helping Folks.”

Rocky Bogenschutz – the owner of Central Distributing who heard about the poor condition of our fire stations and donated all new appliances

Sister Ruth Marie Nickerson – whose life work is serving others

Nancy Hinds

Andrew Mitchell and his parents Bruce and Stephanie – Andrew was violently gunned down, but his parents are not going to let the violence stop them.

Tim McDonald and Eddie Zosky – local boys done good in the pros who are now back home and coaching our youth

Pete Weber

Home Depot – who provided materials and manpower for our White Picket Fences project

DeBas Chocolatier – who is always willing to donate their wonderful products for events and visitors

Harold & Betty Zinkin

But there is a third core value that a truly healthy City must possess. It is the foundation upon which Unity and Love of Community is built. That is the foundation of **FAITH**.

(Acknowledge faith-based organizations)

One by One Leadership—rebuilding our poor neighborhoods one by one

Fresno Covenant Foundation – Recently awarded a large grant to provide literacy programs for our children

Randy White of FIFUL – Fresno Institute for Urban Learning – who recruit college students to volunteer for reading programs for our kids

Cornerstone -- their food basket program feeds thousands

People's Church

ESA -- who provide support to widows, orphans and the downtrodden.

(Show van slides – talk about accident of Jonathan Stewart. All 16 people helping to save his life were under one mission to help a fellow citizen. Those 16 people are now a new family. These are “Folks Helping Folks.” Acknowledge the people from this scene in attendance today.)

(Talk about perception of Fresno – we've had some horrible times in Fresno. 9 children were killed in the Wesson mass murder. This is not what Fresno is.)

In conclusion, you can see that the state of this City is strong. We can look confidently into the future because our Faith, Unity and Love of Community has never been stronger.

God Bless you, God Bless Fresno and God Bless America.